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Transnational Ties within Azorean Multigenerational Kinship Groups: Multi-connectedness and ICTs

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> It's like we live in the same area because we always know about one another by phone.
>
> Lucia, returnee, 64 years

Introduction[1]

The development of new information and communication technology (ICT) has a substantial impact on migrants' lives. Studies generally recognize that ICTs play a major role in the conservation of transnational ties, offering innovative resources that rapidly incorporate in migrants' everyday life and facilitate family relations across national borders.[2] The proliferation of Internet-based communication, smartphones, and social media favors the creation of innovative forms of co-presence in transnational families.[3] They are based on simultaneity and increasing frequency of contacts across time and space, thus challenging the idea that strong family relationships require face-to-face contacts and physical presence. Maintaining contacts at a distance among family members dispersed by migration is though not a new phenomenon. As Vertovec points out, in the past, traditional migratory groups, such as Portuguese or Italians, also developed modalities to maintain ties with homeland.[4] Letters, visits, and phone calls were the main modalities to conserve transnational ties in the past. Older forms of transnationalism contrast with those currently observed due to communication patterns that changed dramatically. Today, a variety of modalities allow fluid and instant communication that was inconceivable a few years ago. The field of ICTs evolves rapidly; not only the diversity of new technologies, but the plurality of their use (calls, messaging, as well as internet can be used on smartphones) is also observed. Some authors speak about "polymedia"[5] to describe this ever-increasing plurality of communication modalities that enhance "connected presence" in various practices. New media are understood as environments of affordances that users can navigate by in order to manage their relationships.

While there is a consensus about ICTs' influence on current transnational contacts between migrants and family left behind in homeland, most researches focus on recent migratory phenomena or particular cases, such as ageing parents[6] or transnational motherhood.[7] The impact of new technologies on transnational practice developed by older migrant groups is little documented yet. Old transnationalism practices and ties also exist and can be conserved in time, regardless the capacities to participate in communications allowing virtual or connected co-presence.

In this article, we question how the use of new ICTs influences transnational connections and their perpetuation in time, over long periods, within multigenerational kinship groups dispersed through migration. We draw on the case of Azorean migrants in Quebec to argue that the use and impact of ICTs on transnational contacts depends on pre-existing relationship and insertion in transnational space. This means that it depends on individual's current position in transnational space (networks, status, ideology related to family, and ethnic belonging). New technologies can consolidate existing configurations of transnational networks and eventually contribute to their transformation, but cannot create such networks or replace other forms of intimacy. Rather, new technologies are incorporated in pre-existing communication exchanges, complement other forms of sociability and can transform them, facilitating intergenerational transmission of transnational ties across time and space. Azorean multigenerational kinship groups in Canada illustrate this phenomenon: Lucia's words in the beginning express a capacity to maintain multiple connections with family members located in different countries. Lucia, a first-generation migrant in the 1960s, returned in the Azores, upon her retirement, by the end of the 1990s. She maintains contacts with her children and siblings dispersed in various locations, in Quebec, other Canadian provinces, and the US. This current state of relations is based on a long history of transnational connections, using several modalities: regular exchanges (letters, phone calls), family gatherings, visits and other transnational practice. Such transnational formation is not rare among Azorean migrant kinship groups that we have examined in our research. It emphasizes the multiple facets of sociability encompassing transnational social spaces created by Azorean migrants.

We begin this article by examining the literature on ICTs and transnational families, focusing on the impact of new media on transnational contacts over time. The context of our research, the Azorean migration, and the methodology are then presented. Our analysis is structured in two parts. The first part focuses on transnational connections, modalities used for communication at a distance and their changes across time and generations. The second part presents two factors determinant for transnational connections: family relations characterized by multi-connectedness and visits. Finally, we consider the impact of ICTs on transnational connections and we conclude emphasizing the importance of insertion in a transnational space where virtual co-presence created by ICTs juxtaposes various forms of family sociability.

Researching Transnational Kinship and ICTs

Kinship groups are considered one of the enduring types of transnational formations that can create transnational social spaces through activities and exchanges developed by their members across national borders.[8] Transnationalism scholars point out that insertion in multigenerational family networks where transnational practice and multiple cultural references are present on a regular basis shapes second-generation descendants' identities.[9] Children raised in family environments where ideas, persons and practices belonging to various cultural frames circulate regularly, become as adults, active actors in the perpetuation of such multi-local spaces.

However, research rarely examines the impact of ICTs' expansion in long-lasting transnational spaces, such as those created by Portuguese Azorean migrants dispersed in several locations in Canada and the US. Our ethnography on Azorean migrants in Quebec documents how various media are combined to maintain multiple family relations, locally and transnationally, over several decades and across three generations. We consider that multi-connectedness—a capacity to maintain active ties with multiple actors using various modalities according to characteristics of contacts—is determinant to perpetuation of transnational practice in time. It involves a process of incorporating new media in routines of family communication at a distance, following pre-existing communication patterns.

Development of new ICTs accelerated over the last years, contributing to emergence of new forms of sociability, based on virtual or ambient co-presence.[10] Widespread diffusion of smartphones represents an essential social resource that facilitates forms of intimacy at a distance.[11] Social media and Internet-based communication are also heavily used in transnational family routines of communication.[12] More and more studies attempt to understand how new technologies shape transnational family life[13] and show that ICTs influence communication between migrants and their family left behind in the origin country in different contexts.[14] For instance, Nedelcu (2012) demonstrates that new transnational habitus and new "connected ways of living together" emerge among Romanian migrants in Canada and other countries, using various ICTs to create modalities of virtual co-presence and rituals of communication.[15] Madianou (2012) points out that ICTs use enhances new modalities of transnational mothering for Filipina mothers in the UK, consequently transforming their identities and ways to negotiate ambivalence and conciliation of work and family responsibilities.[16] Virtual co-presence created through the ICTs generates family routines that include regular exchanges with family members living in others countries, thus enhancing transformation of relations, roles, and identities. However, virtual presence complements other forms of co-presence (by proxy, physical, imagined) in families dispersed between various countries.[17]

Studies on transnational families and new technologies examined the nature of relations involved in new forms of sociability and intimacy at a distance.[18] Accessibility of electronic media at reduced costs favour increasing frequency and intensity of exchanges in transnational families.[19] Moreover, "the distinctive feature of technology-mediated tools is to break the distance and time limitations that prevented ongoing family communication."[20] Communication by ICTs enhances the feeling of "closeness" between siblings.[21] Terms such as "virtual co-presence" (Baldassar 2008) and "ambient co-presence" (Bacigalup and Camara 2012) have been recommended to describe this sense of simultaneity that ICTs create through the possibility to share information in real time.[22] As Chambers points out, "unlike the kind of communication afforded by letter writing, which delivers old news, email allows migrants to become absorbed and engaged in the immediate daily routines of their families."[23] For instance, through Internet technologies, migrant mothers actively participate to decision-making and the education of their children who live with family left behind in the origin country.[24] Maintaining this proximity, "shared time" or "emotional closeness," especially during life cycle events, is considered essential for transnational family life.[25] To describe these new configurations of family relations, Benitez (2012) proposes the notion of "e-families" underlining that family members are constantly "connected."[26] Possibility to hear the voice and exchange news in real time facilitates the fluidity of relations at a distance.[27] As a consequence of this diversification, new forms of co-presence at a distance are observed. For instance, Madianou defines the "ambient co-presence," as "the peripheral, yet intense awareness of distant others made possible through the affordances of ubiquitous media environment."[28]

Studies on ICTs and migration mostly focus on recent migrants and their family members separated for a relatively short period of time. This emerging scholarship does not capture how new ICTs are integrated by and can modify the communication patterns of older migrant groups who maintained transnational ties over several decades and across generations. Some elements emerge from Baldassar's long term research on Italian migrants. This research documents how Italian migrants in Australia maintain contacts with their ageing parents in Italy through letters, phone calls, and visits, and organize various caregiving arrangements. Factors that determine these transnational practices are related to the dialectics between negotiated family commitments, capacity to care and cultural notions of obligations.[29] Olwig's study on Caribbean migrants also shows that kin living in European countries, Canada and the US establish and preserve complex networks of relations that facilitate their siblings' migration, but also the exchange of care with ageing family members or youth in homeland or elsewhere.[30]

Furthermore, transnational ties not only can be perpetuated across generations, space and time, but their modalities multiply: older forms of communication are not necessarily abandoned following the diffusion of new ICTs. Madianou and Miller coin the notion of "polymedia" to define the current global climate characterized by plurality of available media and "to describe the new emerging environment of proliferating communicative opportunities."[31] Each medium can highlight complementary facets of communication and thus multiple media are combined for regular communications in order to maintain intimacy in transnational contacts. Consequently, the emphasis shifts from the limitations specific to each medium (cost, quality) to the emotions and social impacts that each medium involves.[32] Multiple uses of technologies can inform practices in transnational families, being also accessible to migrants with limited resources who can exchange news through online media (email, Skype).[33]

We contribute to this discussion by examining how technological advances influence the frequency and form of transnational contacts among family members dispersed in several countries, over decades and across more than three generations. Portuguese Azorean migration to Canada represents an interesting case study in this area, especially for the research on transnational contacts, their transformation over time and their interplay with changes of family networks across generations. Portuguese migrants to Canada established migratory networks based on family ties that facilitated massive migration after the mid–1950s. They maintained strong ties with homeland and created, through this circulation, a transnational social space encompassing various locations in Canada, the US and Portugal where family members were installed.[34]

Context of the Research

Portuguese from the Azores archipelago have a long history of back-and-forth movements and migration to North America. The Azores archipelago is an autonomous region of Portugal, formed of nine islands, situated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; it has its own local government and administrative structures, as well as a rural economy based on farming and fishing. Today, its population totalizes about 240,000; 56 percent of this total are established on the island São Miguel.[35] The Azores was one of the most impoverished regions of Portugal; migration thus represented a strategy for upward mobility and betterment of living conditions. In fact, emigration to Canada is the most recent important migratory route of Azoreans; Brazil and the US prevailed in the past as migrants' destinations. Mass out-migration to Canada started in 1953-1956, when several contingents of male unskilled workers were recruited within an agreement established between Portuguese and Canadian governments. Migrants found work especially in railways and construction industries, settling in urban areas. Soon, numerous waves followed during the 1960s and 1970s; first migrants' kin emigrated based on sponsorship through family reunification programs.[36] Migration involved an important part of the Azores' population and thus had impacts on the region's demography, society and economy.[37] Among others, it opened up opportunities for a social and economic mobility in the insular society structured by rigid hierarchies. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of population was formed by labourers (*lavradores*) living in rural isolated communities, impoverished, unemployed or having low paying jobs, as well as limited access to any resources and to education.[38] As a consequence of this massive migration, Portuguese communities in North America are principally formed by Azoreans, in proportions of 50 to 70 percent, depending on locality.[39]

Migration Networks

Azorean intensive migration to Canada occurred through migration networks based on kinship

and friendship ties that occasioned the movement of small communities from the same villages to same destinations in the host country.[40] This phenomenon is also described as "island-centered migration chains."[41] Consequently, Azorean migrants are settled predominantly in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario (82.8 percent of the total population of Portuguese origin in Canada). They formed cohesive communities in metropolitan areas like Toronto and Montreal, where they regrouped in districts at high density of occupation and having a high level of "institutional completeness"—a variety of institutions (social, economic, cultural, religious) were gradually created.[42] Migrants have maintained contacts with family left behind in the Azores during several decades, through letters, phone calls, visits, and sending remittances back home.[43]

At the 2006 Canadian Census, 410,850 persons declared to be of Portuguese origin; 14 percent of this total was recorded in Quebec. More than three generations are recorded today in families of Portuguese descent in Canada. In Quebec, 57.7 percent of the population declaring a Portuguese origin, aged 15 and more, are of first generation.[44] Although emigration to Canada has a definitive character, return and sometimes re-emigration have also been noted for some first generation migrants and second generations.[45] This phenomenon contributes to the complexity of transnational family relations: returnees on the islands often maintain ties with kin living in various diaspora's communities.

Methodological Considerations

With a multi-sited ethnographic approach, our investigation was simultaneously conducted in the receiving country, in the province of Quebec (Canada) and homeland, the island São Miguel (Azores, Portugal). In total, 129 biographic interviews with members of 45 kinship groups have been completed (79 in Quebec and 50 in the Azores). In the majority of these kinship groups, migrants and their descendants living in Quebec, as well as non-migrant family members and/or returnees in the Azores have been interviewed in order to collect various viewpoints related to their migration experience and its impact on family relations. The number of respondents in each kinship group varies between one and eight (mean=three), according to the family structure and availability of participants. The sample includes 28 Azorean migrants and 51 descendants of 1.5, second and third generations living in the province of Quebec, as well as 35 return migrants (24 first generation migrants and 11 of second generation) and 15 non-migrant relatives in the island São Miguel. From this total, 57 percent are women.

The article is based on analysis of 27 kinship groups, in which returnees, migrants and non-migrants have been systematically interviewed. These kinship groups have been selected also because they display multi-located networks with configurations characterized by significant geographic dispersion of family members participating in active ties. They are composed of family units settled in three or more countries: Canada (mostly in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia), the US (mostly in the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts), the Azores and possibly other parts of the world (Brazil, European countries, etc.). Analysis of these kinship groups served to identify migratory networks and their changes in time, as well as transnational practices and connections.

Communication at a Distance: Changes in Time

All our respondents have reported being somehow engaged in transnational contacts in the past and/or at the present time. However, we could note changes in time with regard to the frequency, modalities and forms of these contacts. At the same time, a wide range of transnational practices – remittances, information, and instrumental exchanges – were reported in all kinship groups. Their relative importance, frequency and intensity also changed in time and along the life course stages. We present in this

section an in-depth analysis of these changes.

Transnational Contacts in the Past

During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, migrants used exclusively letters to communicate with their family living in other locations (homeland or other diasporic communities). Letters were dedicated to inform about current situation of family members and their living conditions. This kind of exchanges has been observed for other migrant groups.[46]

Our data indicate that frequency of transnational exchanges varies according to existing relations between Azorean migrants and their relatives. The highest frequency of communication is observed in cases when migration caused a temporary conjugal separation. For instance, Conceição (returnee, 75 years) remembers that her husband emigrated alone in Canada in the early 1960s, while she stayed on the island. During two years of conjugal separation, they communicated through letters several times a month. By the mid–1960s, Conceição joined her husband in Quebec and maintained contacts with parents and in-laws left behind on the island, writing monthly letters. At the same time, her contacts with other siblings (brothers, sisters, etc.) had lower frequencies, once or twice per year.

Many migrants were confronted with difficulties to maintain regular contacts at a distance through correspondence as they or their siblings in the origin country were illiterate. Some of them returned to school in order to learn writing, while others improvised different ways to communicate with their families on the island. For instance, Maria José (non-migrant, 48 years) remembers that, during her childhood, her immigrant father communicated with family back home through letters written by his co-nationals or only void envelops. Later on, she opted for recorded cassettes to facilitate these exchanges with family at a distance.

> *"... My father was illiterate and [...] he asked someone else to write the letters to my mother. When he couldn't get anyone, he had envelopes with the address and he sent an empty envelope, so my mom would know that he was all right. When my father came back here after five years, he was a bit more evolved, isn't it? I remember that he brought to my mother a tape recorder. We all talked in it to record a cassette for him to know about us. Then, my father had one recorder as well and he recorded the same way. So, my parents exchanged these recorded cassettes."*
> (Maria José, non-migrant, 48 years)

Until the late 1980s, letters sent with various frequencies and greeting cards on important holidays like Christmas, New Year, and Easter represented the predominant means used to communicate with family abroad. Sometimes migrants also sent small amounts of money, "*5, 10 dollars in a letter*" as holiday's gifts for family members or for church donations.

Transnational Contacts at the Present Time

When phone communication became available during the 1980s, respondents also started to use this technology, though infrequently due to its limited accessibility and high costs of international phone calls. Some business owners had a landline for their commerce and the entire neighborhood used it to receive international calls. Several respondents remember how increased accessibility of this technology importantly changed the modalities and the frequency of exchanges during the late 1990s.

"In the past, when my aunts emigrated, they wrote letters to my mother. Nowadays they communicate only by phone. They no longer contact by letter, unless, you know, sending a card at Christmas time. [...] They switched to the phone more than 10 years ago. Before, you had to call through an operator, who did the connection. When these direct calls became accessible, people started to have more contact."
(Joana, non-migrant, 59 years)

Like Joana's mother, many Azoreans reduced considerably the correspondence and substituted it with regular phone calls. As a result, frequency of communications increased. For instance, since her return in the Azores, in 1999, Lucia (64 years) has maintained contacts with her children and siblings at various places in the US and Canada through phone calls (several times weekly) and letters (monthly). Availability of phone communication did not necessarily bring the extinction of letter writing. Some respondents, like Lucia, continue writing letters because they treasure this modality as a personalized testimony of the importance that the authors attach to them. To exemplify it, respondents show letters written by their grand-children or children that they dearly conserve among other souvenirs (photos, drawings, religious artefacts, etc.).

The increasing importance of phone communication is explained not only by the technology improvement, but also the cheaper costs that make it accessible to almost anyone. Pre-paid cards for international calls are available at small costs both in Portugal and Canada. Pre-paid international phone cards allow cheap long-distance calls that favour immediate, direct contact and thus overcome limitations of traditional correspondence.[47] Therefore Vertovec describes them as "the social glue of transnationalism."[48] More recently, national telecommunication providers, such as PT Portugal, offer plans including (un)limited free international calls, during specific time periods, to main diaspora's locations such as the US, Canada, and Brazil. Affordable plans including calls and text messages can also be provided for mobile phones. In addition, few respondents report the use of a special set-up for phone-to-computer calls provided by an online service that allows receiving free calls from Canada via a Canadian phone number installed on a computer. These various options accommodate many needs for regular connections between migrants in North America and islanders.

Furthermore, during the 2000s, the use of Internet-based communications—emails, chat, and Skype—and more recently social media, like Facebook became more and more widespread. Many respondents indicated that they regularly use such modalities to communicate with their distant kin. Mila's family illustrates how changes of communication patterns occur in time with ICTs evolution. Immigrant in the end of the 1950s, Mila (74 years) arrived to Quebec with her children and spouse. She maintained contacts with parents and siblings in homeland through letters. Currently, she and her daughter Luisa (53 years) communicate by phone with relatives in the Azores. Her grand-daughter, Sonia (29 years), prefers Internet-based communications to exchange news, photos and videos with some of the kin living on the islands.

Modalities of Transnational Contacts by Age and Generation

Our analysis of modalities used for current transnational contacts reveals significant differences by age group. Elderly respondents aged more than 60 use almost exclusively phone calls to communicate with kin living abroad. Some of them, like Lucia, continue to exchange letters or greeting cards. However, most abandoned the practice of writing letters. Respondents aged between 40 and 60 also use phone calls and sometimes Internet-based communications, as well as social media.

According to respondents' narratives, individual capabilities explain these differences, more

than accessibility to technology itself or socioeconomic resources. For instance, Lucia (64 years) explains that her children offered her a computer but she didn't accept it. The effort required for learning how to use a new technology is considered too important: *"No, I don't have Internet. All my kids have it, but I don't. I said: forget it. It's too many things to learn. I call them and that's it."* Lucia also emphasizes that her technological skills are limited, as she has only primary education. Her children, with college education and white collar professions, have the capacities to operate various technologies. Thus, their role in larger network of contacts becomes more and more predominant as they take over exchanges with other siblings through Internet. However, intensive use of phone communications facilitates frequent exchanges between mother and children about daily life and immediate needs, creating a feeling of proximity and intimacy despite the geographic distance. Combining letters and phone calls, Lucia maintains regular contacts with her three children living in the US and her numerous siblings settled in various locations in the US and Canada.

Younger respondents aged 20 to 40 years, both the Azorean-descendants in Canada and their Azorean counterparts, indicate without hesitation that they prefer Internet-based communications over other modalities. In the case of Sonia, tools available on Internet facilitate the preparation of exchanges conducted in Portuguese with her Azorean kin.

> *"I do not speak Portuguese well enough to conduct a conversation and my uncle does not speak English or French well enough. So, when I write to them, I go in Google translator and I write my text in French. It is translated there in Portuguese. I read it and sometimes change something if it makes no sense. But let's say that, with his children, we speak in English. On Facebook, we can also share photos. [...] We also send frequently e-cards with our pictures."* (Sonia, third generation Azorean-descendant, 39 years)

Sonia's example suggests that modalities used depend on interlocutor and determine the frequency of exchanges. Highest frequencies (daily, several times per week or weekly) are registered for parents and children, as well as for grand-parents and grand-children. Younger respondents who use Internet-based communications also demonstrate high frequencies of exchanges, although not necessarily regular. Frequencies are significantly lower for communications with other types of interlocutors (aunts, uncles, nephews/ nieces, in-laws, friends).

Furthermore, Sonia's example illustrates the situation observed in many kinship groups where elder family members cannot assimilate the use of Internet-based communications and *delegate* to their children, who are familiar with new technologies, the maintenance of regular transnational contacts with kin living overseas. For instance, Lucia's children communicate between them regularly by email, chat, or Skype; thus, they are in charge to organize family gatherings and visits of their parents in the US. Cristina (non-migrant, 33 years) reports that she exchanges photos, small videos and emails with her cousins and sometimes with her aunt in Canada to communicate family news or "just stay in touch" on behalf of her parents.

These data indicate that modalities used to maintain transnational connections vary not only in time due to new available technologies and according to individual capacities, but also according to age. Transnational connections vary by generation and age according to existing relations, the frequency of exchanges, the modality used and the content transmitted. Children's abilities to use Internet can create "a knowledge gap with their parents,"[49] thus intergenerational differences with regard to Internet use are often noted.[50] At the same time, multiple modalities can be used simultaneously. Baldassar et al. found that new forms of communication do not necessarily displace existing ones, but rather add new possibili-

ties to those already in place.[51] Therefore, overall frequency of communications increases alongside technology evolution. Different forms of communication can co-exist because each fills in different purposes and with different people; various modalities are used to communicate specific contents.[52]

These variations are also reflected in our study. Respondents often combine at least two modalities of communication: Internet and phone, or phone and letters. Among respondents who use only a single modality of communication, phone is the most preferred technology, while Internet is rarely used as a unique medium. Each modality corresponds to a particular circumstance and transmits a specific type of content. Phone is preferred for sharing regular news about activities, events, health condition or just to spend some time together to fulfill the feelings of missing and longing (*saudade*). Internet is privileged for sharing photos and short videos, to plan and organize family events, for quick updates, "to say hello" or "how are you?", as well as for business and professional activities. Visual materials are often posted on Facebook where various family members can have access and participate in exchanges, at their convenience, without the constraints of communication modalities that require simultaneous co-presence. Webcams are used for regular or exceptional exchanges to facilitate the participation of distant kin in family interactions, rituals or events. These forms of virtual co-presence that allow individuals living in different countries to nurture and perpetuate a sense of family cohesion and carry on a family life at a distance are also observed in other contexts.[53]

Delegation of transnational contacts to descendants in Azorean families generally causes a higher participation of younger generations in transnational relations. This process sustains the ongoing transformation of family transnational networks as a consequence of ageing: the elder generation of first migrants and their non-migrant siblings fades away; younger descendants gradually take over the maintenance of transnational contacts. As descendants gain a more prominent role in communications, transnational networks reconfigure and the sense of transnational contacts is redefined.

The Cousins from Canada: Maintaining Transnational Ties Across Generations

Descendants living in various locations, as well as younger Azorean generations have been raised in a family environment where transnational relations, references to migration history and kinship living elsewhere have been themes constantly present in family narratives. They have been exposed to religious rituals and celebrations of traditional festivals, reciprocal family visits, gatherings for celebrating family rituals related to life-cycle events, as well as other transnational exchanges. On such occasions, they meet relatives living in other locations, observe how elder generations interact and familiarize with their stories about migration and homeland. As a consequence, descendants on both sides participate in transnational connections, especially when having a close, direct kinship relation, similar ages, common affinities, opportunities for shared activities and speaking Portuguese (or other common) language.[54]

For instance, Cristina describes her privileged relation with some of her cousins who share common memories and similar characteristics. On the contrary, other relatives who do not share this kind of experience are not included in Cristina's network of direct contacts, although they can have exchanges with her parents.

> *"We have similar ages [with cousins S.]. On the other side of the family, my uncle's children in Toronto are older and perhaps cannot deal with the Internet, thus the contact is more difficult, more distant; in time, it fades away a little. And also they didn't come here for some time, while [the cousins S.] came here recently. So, I had with them a personal contact recently."* (Cristina, non-migrant, 33 years)

This observation sustains Levitt's thesis (2009) that insertion in multigenerational family networks, displaying transnational practice and including multiple cultural references on a regular basis, favors the perpetuation of transnational connections among generations.[55] Current transnational contacts observed for migrants' descendants draw on a history of intensive "kinwork" (Baldassar 2007) deployed over time by first generation migrants.[56] This is particularly clear in Guida's narrative. At the time of emigration in Quebec, Guida was 12 years old. She grew up in a family climate where transnational contacts and exchanges have been part of family routines. As she explains, her parents and family members of their generation established this dynamics of exchanges that expanded over decades to include descendants. Multiple modalities are currently used to maintain this transnational family space.

> *"In New Year and Easter time, we contact each other by phone or we send postcards. We also receive a lot of letters and postcards. We stay in contact all the time by phone. It's one sister or another who takes the initiative to call and ask news. If someone's ill, for instance, one of the sisters or a cousin will call to tell us about that [...]. There are periods when we don't visit each other every year, but we always take the time to inform about the others. We always gather at weddings, funerals or other events."* (Guida, 1.5 generation Azorean-descendant, 42 years)

In a previous section, we show that in several families elder generations delegate transnational contacts to descendants who use Internet communications to facilitate the exchanges. This process illustrates that mechanisms to perpetuate these contacts across generations are set in place incorporating new ICTs into already existent transnational family practices. New routines of communication emerge including intergenerational transmission of family commitments to preserve transnational connections. This process in migrant families is mirrored in non-migrant part of the kinship. For instance, Joana's mother maintained regular communications with some of her immigrant sisters. Joana (non-migrant, 59 years) and her cousins in the US took over these contacts when their ageing parents, after severe illness and hearing loss, could not communicate directly anymore.

These data highlight that connected ways of living enhance the perpetuation of transnational contacts across generations. This process is discussed in the next section where we advance the notion of multi-connectedness in order to explain how multiple, pre-existent, transnational relations inform current transnational contacts. Not only first generation migrants, but also descendants as well as non-migrant kin participate to the creation and perpetuation of these contacts in time, bringing to the picture different forms and communication styles.

Multi-connectedness and Transnational Kinship Over Time

Intensification of transnational contacts depends not only on increasing accessibility of technologies, but also on other factors. Family relations are determinant and explain differences observed with regard to the forms and modalities of transnational connections by age and generation. We found that characteristics of family relations influence the perpetuation of transnational contacts in time and across generations.

Azorean migrants maintained a family life including many age-related commitments and obligations, family rituals and traditional celebrations within a transnational social space spanning localities in several countries, Canada, the US, and Portugal. We define as *multi-connectedness,* this capacity to maintain multiple connections and strong family relations across national borders, using various modalities (regular exchanges, transnational practice, family gatherings and visits) and technologies. It is

an important characteristic of Azorean kinship groups who focused their identity on this transnational bonding. Such a *savoir faire* to maintain multiple ties within and across national frontiers is based on an ideology that considers family solidarity and relationships as core values of one's cultural identity. This ideology inspired first generation migrants to form migration chains that include gradually many family members in migratory movement. The importance of multi-connectedness is expressed in Luisa's words:

> *"For me, it's important to maintain these relations. Even if we are far away, even if we don't visit every year, even if we don't see each other. Because it's easy to forget. This is not specific for immigration, it's for all that I do. It's important to maintain continuously the contact, even if not frequently, it still is a contact."* (Luisa, 1.5 generation, 53 years)

The capacity to maintain transnational connections that Azorean migrants developed is based on several particularities. Frequency of transnational contacts varies a lot and mostly depends on kinship relation. In the past, first generation migrants maintained ties with their ageing parents and siblings left behind on the island. Following death of elders in homeland, transnational contacts loosened in some kinship groups. According to our data, transnational contacts are today mostly conserved by brothers and sisters, from the generation of first migrants, as well as some members of the following generations, living in different countries. They communicate regularly when using the Internet and the phone, and sporadically when using only the phone.

Kinship network configuration changed over time, as the older generations faded away and many siblings became migrants through established migratory chains. More and more transnational contacts today are reported among cousins of first or following generations. Most of them use phone communications, but a lot use both phone and Internet. Other transnational relations mentioned are between returnees and their children or grand-children in Canada, and with other interlocutors (aunts, uncles, nephews/ nieces, in-laws, friends). As previously shown, frequency of contacts depends in general on the closeness of relations, increasing in case of direct relations and decreasing when conflicts interfere and quality deteriorates.

The diversification of modalities used and the extension of relations included in transnational connections follow several norms: exchanges occur predominantly between family members of the same age and the same generation and mostly depend on the relationship with the interlocutor. Therefore important intergenerational differences are observed. The networks of first generation migrants and their non-migrant counterparts are definitely wider, as they include active, direct ties with numerous persons situated in various locations. On the contrary, descendants of the second and following generations have selective direct contacts with some of their closest relatives, especially those of the same generation and the same age. This illustrates that multi-connectedness requires a continuous process of transformation in order to incorporate new technologies and modalities in family relations. It is a permanently evolving process, embodied by various actors. Another factor influencing these contacts is the practice of visits that shapes importantly the family relations. Visits can favor the creation of new ties or renew existing relations, and facilitate transmission of core values and rituals from one generation to the next.

Visits

Privileged ties among cousins can be formed during visits on the island, in childhood and adolescence. These visits lasting between a week and two months offer unique occasions to share special moments, organize leisure activities and develop long-lasting friendships. Some migrants have their own

house on the island, while others stay in their siblings' homes during these visits. All agree that it is important to enjoy and cultivate the opportunities to establish various forms of conviviality (*convivio*) that cement their family relationships furthermore. Most of the migrants and returnees respondents in our sample indicated at least one to three visits on the island since their migration (very few never visited and several visit every year). The frequency of visits is higher for first generation migrants than for descendants, varying according to family dynamics, individual characteristics and life stage. For example, families with young children travel less than those with teenagers. All types of visits identified in literature on other migrant groups—crisis, routine, ritual, and duty, special and tourist visits[57] — have also been reported by our respondents. By visits, descendants familiarize with their ancestral homeland, revive relationships with distant kin, affirm one's belonging to the island and relieve feelings of longing for this land. Therefore they are a requisite for transmission of cultural heritage. Family obligation is an important component of the visit; visitors' presence is expected by all local kin, in family feasts and gatherings. A facilitator of this circulation across borders is the dual citizenship that many migrants acquired. This condition favours the exchanges between countries where migrants maintain affiliations.[58]

At the same time, non-migrants and returnees also visit their relatives settled in Canada, especially on occasions involving life cycle rituals and celebrations, such as weddings, baptisms, anniversaries, graduations or funerals that mark individual biography and family history. Visits have higher frequencies for non-migrants travelling for multiple purposes (professional and family motivations), and for returnees when their children live abroad. For instance, Lucia and her husband, returnees in the Azores, travel to Rhodes Island every year in order to participate in family events involving their children and grand-children. This practice can be regular or exceptional and offers settings for descendants to establish and consolidate their own relationship with their Azorean kinship.

Visits are essential for maintaining transnational family life because they offer the forms of physical co-presence that other modalities cannot provide.[59] Azoreans' insertion in family networks with active connections determines the practice of visits as an important asset for building a kinship narrative of the family regular visit to homeland, as observed for other migrant groups.[60] Such a shared storyline is also an arena for debates and negotiations about belonging, exchanges, inheritances, material proprieties and other family matters that sometime create family conflicts and rupture of ties, as other authors also emphasized.[61] Having direct contact and shared experiences are central for maintaining transnational connections; affinities and common narratives can be then created and perpetuated by contacts at a distance using ICTs. Therefore pre-existing relations in a climate of multi-connectedness among migrants and their Azorean siblings are paramount for the perpetuation of transnational connections in time and across generations.

Impacts of ICTs Use on Transnational Family Relations

Considering this important continuity of transnational relations within Azorean multigenerational kinship groups, we discuss here the multiple impacts of ICTs use on transnational connections. Their consequences can be observed on the structure of family network, but also on the exchanges. On one hand, the configuration of family network transforms as parents partially delegate transnational connections to their descendants, at least for Internet-based communication. Hence, descendants, both women and men, become central, active actors of the communication patterns and functioning within the family network. Consequently, diversification of active ties due to descendants' involvement and consolidation of contacts with distant kin is observed in most kinship groups. On the other hand, types of exchanges diversified and overall transnational connections intensified and enriched, following incorporation of new ICTs in transnational routines of communication.

Respondents who use Internet-based communications indicate that the frequency of contacts has increased since these technologies have been integrated in family routines. They communicate more often, have more rapid exchanges and initiate their contacts easily due to lower costs, accessibility and facilities related to this technology. At the same time, Internet-based communication also offers the possibility to maintain more contacts with a wider network and to better accompany the lives of relatives at a distance. These various media offer forms of virtual co-presence that complement physical ones.[62] The possibility to share the details of each other's lives at a distance generates an increasing feeling of proximity with these distant kin: better knowledge about siblings' activities and preferences, lifestyle, follow up of everyday activities, as well as special events and experiences.

Emails and social media, such as Facebook, allow informational exchanges, without limitations related to time lag or costs of communication. In addition, Internet provides translation facilities that permit overcoming linguistic barriers. This potentially constant interaction contributes to more fluid communications.

> *"We can follow more closely their lives there [in Canada] and, on the contrary, they probably also can accompany better ours here. For example, when [the cousin] had a child, I remember seeing the girl as a baby, and now I have thousands of pictures with her as a child. We accompany the family evolution in this way too."*
> (Cristina, non-migrant, 33 years)

As a consequence, the quality of transnational relations has been reinforced and relations strengthen. In some rare cases, social networks like Facebook are also used to identify distant family relatives or kinship ties with new family members or to better understand family genealogy. Another reported incidence of ICTs' use is the organization of family events at a distance; connecting participants from various countries through a platform like Skype can facilitate family gatherings when family members are dispersed in different locations.

Finally, in some rare cases, ICTs are also used to provide caregiving for ageing parents, to accompany them and offer emotional comfort. For instance, Nadia (35 years) remembers that her mother living on the island had a permanent contact with her grand-mother, aged 87, living in Montreal, using a webcam. They spent many hours talking, sharing meals or just "being together." This use of ICTs is rare among families interviewed because it requires arrangements and technical skills on both sides, which is infrequent.

This point brings us to the discussion of limitations related to sociability and intimacy at a distance. If ICTs present many opportunities that facilitate transnational contacts, they also involve physical and temporal limitations.[63] The use of new technologies depends on communication infrastructure that determine accessibility to appropriate technologies, on individual's resources such as physical and intellectual skills and abilities (language, literacy, etc.) to use these technologies, time and money to access them.[64] The major limitation of new technologies refers to the absence of physical co-presence. The need for physical contact persists in the context of transnational communication.[65] Therefore, the visit remains necessary to enliven transnational connections.[66] Moreover, ICTs are not convenient or adequate to all exchange.[67] In cases of illness, ageing or crisis, ICTs can be even regarded as "inadequate modes of communication."[68]

In addition, the pre-existing relationships and their quality are central to maintain effective contacts through ICTs.[69] In the case of Azorean kinship groups, individuals' insertion in transnational spaces formed by kinship relations and their practices creates the premises for such relations to develop among various generations of descendants.

Concluding Remarks

Examples discussed here show that new ICTs determine an intensification of transnational contacts in multigenerational kinship groups formed by Azorean migrants in Quebec. Our results confirm previous studies on new media and migration in other contexts.[70] However, our research highlights that ICTs' impact on transnational connections, in the case of older migrant groups displaying various transnational practices over several decades, depends on individual's current position in a transnational space formed by kinship networks. New media are incorporated in routines of family communication at a distance through younger members, migrants' descendants and their non-migrant counterparts. This process occurs in a family climate characterized by multi-connectedness, attaching central importance to family conviviality, solidarity and traditions. Therefore, it contributes to transformation of transnational ties, network structure and communication styles.

We demonstrate that multiple media are combined, but also that specific media are privileged by age and generation: elder respondents, migrants of first generation prefer phone, while the younger members of second and third generations favour Internet-based communications. Forms of "old transnationalism," such as those created by Azorean migrants in Quebec, are revisited and renewed through the process of delegation that enhances younger generations' involvement in transnational connections.[71] However, social and cultural contexts of family life influence the use of technologies in regular communications at a distance. New technologies are incorporated in family practices according to family relationships, expectations and commitments, and thus reinforcing characteristics of relations already present.

Our case study contributes to research on migration and ICTs demonstrating how these connected ways of living, expressed by multi-connectedness within various family relations, and facilitated by new media, favor the perpetuation of transnational contacts across time and generations in older migrant groups. In this process, insertion in transnational space is of central importance as virtual co-presence created by ICTs juxtaposes other forms of sociability that are characteristic to transnational practice. This observation highlights a larger discussion about the temporality of transnational practices and connections, their transformation over time and the factors influencing this process.

Notes

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